

Social & Political Independence - If We Can Keep It!

"Under what circumstances is it moral for a group to do that which is not moral for a member of that group to do alone? It is the key question - a radical question that strikes at the root of the whole dilemma of government. Anyone who answers honestly and abides by all consequences knows where he stands - and what he will die for."

- Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, 1966 -

We are living in possibly the most politically polarized period in the United States since the Civil War. The President's overall job approval rating has fallen to 43 percent, while Congress has attained a new historic low of just 13 percent. Republicans seek spending cuts while Democrats hold out for mandatory tax increases and further wealth redistribution. Tea Party groups advocate smaller, constitutionally-constrained government, while the Occupy movement clamors for an end to capitalism, replacing it with what they call "socialism" - but which is, more accurately a fascist, state-controlled econ-

omy. There is an ongoing battle between those who argue for maintaining a secular form of government while others wish to see their personal religious values enacted into law. On any given issue from war to immigration, education, guns, unions, health care, energy, environment, abortion, drugs, entitlements, national service, jobs, or climate change, there are diametrically opposing factions, with many demanding that government force be used in order to impose their views upon everyone else.

In a recent web posting, someone wrote, "Way too many Americans seem to be losing all sense of what is right and what is wrong; what it means to treat others with dignity and respect," and when reading the daily news, it seems hard to argue with that assessment. For example, when the Tea Party is charged first and foremost as being racist, then concern for truth, tolerance and understanding have already been tossed out the window. When the Occupy Wall Street movement states on its website that "the only solution is World Revolution" and engages in illegal seizure of property, vandalism, and sexual assaults, you know that the rule of law has been abandoned. Civility, reasoned discourse and consensus are all early casualties in such an environment.

How then do we sift through all the emotions and the rhetoric on these many

issues and come to a rational and consistent political position? This is only possible by first answering the question: *What is the proper role of government?*

Throughout most of history, men have been treated as mere components, owing their fealty to some larger and more important social entity, whether that be a tribe, theocracy, monarchy, community, society or the state. All of these *collectivist* systems regarded each person as an

their own happiness being an end in itself. Within this framework, government was seen not as the master and director of human life, but simply as a necessary tool to protect those rights, thereby allowing every person the opportunity to determine their own destiny and pursue it to the best of their ability.

At its most fundamental level, the American Revolution was a battle waged between two different ideologies: *Individualism* versus *collectivism*. 235 years ago, individualism triumphed and the greatness that America has achieved is a direct result of those hard-won liberties. But during the past century this country has slowly abandoned its roots, moving back towards a communal collectivism where the government once again exerts its power to dictate goals, control behavior in most areas of our lives, and treat us once more as uniform and interchangeable cogs in the social machinery. Today's great fiction of serving the "general welfare" has now all but replaced our once cherished independence, binding each of our fates together for better or worse - and usually for the worse!

We currently face numerous economic and social problems. Yet, despite all of the daily attention these issues are receiving, there seem to be few workable solutions. This is because we are asking all the wrong questions. Instead of won-

dering why students are doing so poorly in schools and universities, the better question would be, "Should the government be in the education business?" Rather than asking how the government could create more jobs, it would be more productive to consider, "Should the government be involved with job creation in the first place?" Should the government have an energy, environment or trade policy? Should it redistribute wealth? Should it have the power to print money?

So, what exactly IS the proper role of government?

This is the truly important question. Are governments instituted for the purpose of managing our lives - or, as the Declaration of Independence states, are they "instituted among men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed," in order to secure the individual rights of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness?" Anyone who asks and answers this honestly, and is prepared to abide by all consequences of that answer will then have the key to understanding what are the appropriate actions that a government should take in every circumstance.

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expendable resource to be used as necessary in service of some "higher good," and the purpose of government was to define the nature of that good, and be the mechanism which determined how to then best preserve and utilize its human capital.

The United States was the first country to stake out a radically different position. Building upon the ideas of Classical Liberalism, each individual was recognized as being autonomous and free, in possession of legal rights equal to all other men, with the rational pursuit of

An Island Of Medical Freedom In A Nanny-State Sea

Today, if government doesn't regulate something, you can be sure someone will ask why not. From heating pads to home improvement to health care, the demand for government regulations has given



Maureen Bader

Government regulations have laid a dead hand on entrepreneurship and innovation. This has made many people worse, not better off.

Now imagine a place where people could contract with other people free from government regulations. Would they still be safe and secure? Yes, private regulations already exist in the U.S., even in the health care sector. In fact, a new report shows where entrepreneurs and innovators could set up islands of health care freedom right here in the U.S.

Regulations are the rules that govern an activity. When people talk about regulation, they usually mean government

regulation, but government isn't the only organization that makes rules. It is possible for private individuals to create rules of conduct to govern their activities without the coercive force of government.

Private regulations already help people stay safe and secure. Private regulation refers to voluntary agreements and contracts between people, and is the product of market decision-making, not government coercion. For example, if a corporation, or even a government, wants to let people know they will be financially secure if they buy their debt, that corporation or government goes to private bonding agencies like Standard and Poor's.

Private companies like Consumers Reports also create a sense of security with its tests and certification of products.

Voluntary, private regulations are not foreign to the health care sector either. Private licensing organizations already work to make people more safe and secure. Two private organizations, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and the American Nurses Credentialing Center, which makes credentials in 26 different areas of specialization available to nurses, show government is not required to ensure patient safety.

The health care sector is ripe with opportunity for even more voluntary contracts between patients and health care providers. That's because government has often not made us safer and more secure. In fact, government has made many people worse off. Nobel Prize winning economists such as Milton Friedman have pointed out how government bureaus such as the FDA have increased the costs and delayed the introduction of new drugs - and in doing so, have harmed the health of Americans.

bone marrow donations legal.

Human suffering and death don't appear in the cost sheets of government central planners, but do in families who have lost loved ones. Pain, suffering and needless death are the real prices we pay when government regulations prevent doctors and patients from working together to find the best solution for the patient.

What if there was a place, however, where patients and doctors could work together to give patients the best type of health care available. Could one be created right here in the U.S.?

A new Liberty Brief called *Medical Freedom Zones*, published by the Wyoming Liberty Group, describes just how an island of health-care freedom could be created in the U.S. on Indian reservation land.

"The legal precedent to set up a zone for health-care freedom on tribal land already exists," said Regina Meena, Legislative Affairs Analyst at the Wyoming Liberty Group. "We show how to apply an existing tool in a new way."

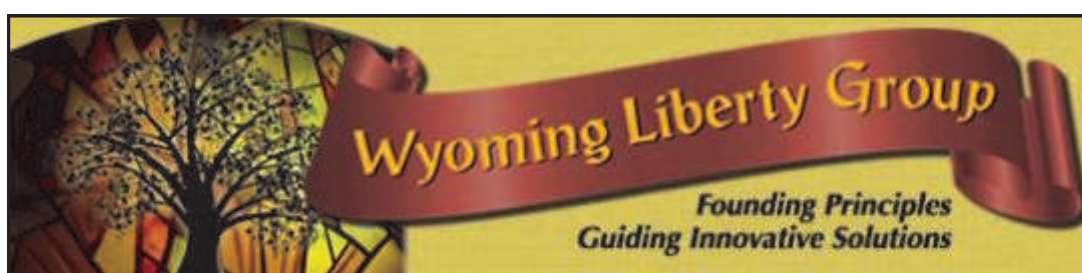
Both the gaming and payday lending industries on reservations are examples of how businesses can deliver the services consumers are looking for free from most bureaucratic interference.

Medical Freedom Zones shows how to apply a similar approach in the health care sector.

The report discusses how an Indian reservation offers greater protections to innovative business because the U.S. Supreme Court shields tribal authority on reservation lands. Health care professionals would be able to set up private businesses and enjoy greater protection from federal government meddling when they contract with a tribal nation. When Indians and non-Indians enter into voluntary, clearly documented contracts, the Supreme Court has upheld tribal sovereignty against most federal and state government interference.

The opportunity to create an island of medical freedom in a nanny-state sea exists right here, right now. A system of private rules and regulations, agreed upon voluntarily by people who freely choose to participate in that market, would provide the safety, security and cost-effective innovation Americans are desperately looking for. Medical freedom zones can bring the entrepreneurial spirit back to health care in America.

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For example, although clinical evidence shows aspirin helps prevent heart attacks, the FDA doesn't allow manufacturers to tell people about this. As a result, people may miss out on this cost-effective preventative measure - and even worse, may die needlessly.

In another example, the National Organ Transplant Act made it illegal to pay for bone marrow donations. Technical advances in the way bone marrow is donated makes the process as simple as a blood donation. Nevertheless a group of cancer patients had to take the government to court to force it to make paid

For The New Year, Regrets You Won't Likely Hear About

As we look towards a new year, thoughtful people assess where they can do better. Naturally, we being imperfect people, we have occasional regrets. Regret is a part of our lives that we wish had turned out differently.



Bruce Hayes

We've all heard of some common regrets. Here are some regrets, however, that I have never heard of in all my years of life on this earth - yet, perhaps, some have had them, so let's take a look.

I WISH I COULD HAVE...

- ◆ Spent more time hanging out in the mall with my friends. This was what all the cool people back then did - and if you weren't cool, you were nothing. I'm sure too much coolness never hurts anyone.
- ◆ Gone to fast food places more often. Years ago my mom actually expected me to - be at dinner. When I was-

n't there, she put me on a guilt trip about all her work spent to make good wholesome suppers and how inconsiderate it was for me to be elsewhere. Come on, how manipulative can you get?

- ◆ Traded some former exercise time for more leisure time. All that work. All that sweat. All that time dragging my butt around fields and streets working to stay in shape - and, here I am, 53, with absolutely no evidence to show for it.

- ◆ Spent more time at the office. Think about it. All that time I gave to my kids and later my grandkids, when I could have really DONE something and made something of myself at work. No wonder I'm still a measly, lowly teacher/bureaucrat eking out a miserly living as an underpaid hireling.

- ◆ Not waited until I got married for sex. Now this is getting personal. When all my friends were "discovering their sexuality" I was told to be a good boy and not catch anything I wouldn't want to pass on to my future wife. Needless to say, I did eventually get married and I've had a medically boring life.
- ◆ Had fewer than three kids.

Look, raising three kids is expensive. If I'd only had one or two, I could have owned a cabin by a lake somewhere. Of course, it would be a sticky proposition to go to them and say, alright, one of you is going to be disowned because it's a cheaper way to go. You all decide which one it's going to be...

- ◆ Cheated on my college tests for

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a higher GPA. At one time, GPA was everything. Now it means nothing, but don't bother me with details. I could have gotten away with a little cheating but was too chicken to try it. Talk about real shame and regret, everything I hear in the media now is - "do it for gain." It's only a "problem" if you get caught.

- ◆ Dropped out and went on welfare. Here's one for reflection. The wel-

fare state was already fully in place when I was in my twenties. I could have taken the easy way, skipped school, and just lived life. But no, I had to take the hard way, and it hasn't gotten any easier.

- ◆ Taken up smoking. Let me tell you, a guy like me in high school truly needed all the social backup he could get. This would have been an easy way to get it too, and unbelievably I said no; "a lifetime of addiction isn't worth the short moments of imaginary acceptance to people I will know only for a short time." How utterly and insufferably square can you get?

- ◆ Sold drugs for extra income. Money has always been very hard to come by and when I was a youth, I could have sold cocaine, made a ton, invested wisely, and been in the presently-vulcanized 1percent class of people right now... Dang.

- ◆ Watched more TV. Even as a simple eighth grader in the early 70s', I realized that most of the stuff on TV was garbage and an utter waste of time. But I could have at least been in the media-friendly conversant social circles. Admittedly, it would be pointless today to

bring up an episode of Starsky and Hutch, but then again, most TV is still lame, so who would really know the difference?

- ◆ Pushed around more kids when I was in junior high. I spent too many days as a victim of bullies. But looking back, some of the kids I was friends with, I could have actually been a bully to. Whoa... The power rush. Had I been a bully, I might have qualified myself to move around in the contemporary body politic.

So - there they are, and I'm sure you can think of more - the regrets you never hear about. Yet much of this is actually promoted or glamorized by our cultural elites in some way. Now there's a good regret: I could have been a real insider "regressive" cultural elitist socialist pig. That way it would have been easier to get printed in the mainstream papers.

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